

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) An elongating method of an optical fiber base material, wherein
in an elongating process of elongating an optical fiber base material by heating the optical fiber base material in a heating furnace so that a diameter of the optical fiber base material is reduced,
before the optical fiber base material is elongated from an end thereof, a distorted portion of the optical fiber base material is corrected by being heated to be softened in the heating furnace.
2. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 1, wherein
when the optical fiber base material is heated to be softened in the heating furnace, a heater to heat the heating furnace is heated to a temperature in a range of 1,800 °C to 1,900 C°.
3. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 1, wherein
the elongation is started, after the optical fiber base material is attached to a hanging mechanism so as to be hung in the heating furnace, the distorted portion of the optical fiber base material is heated to be softened, and a difference between an elongation axis and one of the optical fiber base material and a dummy rod attached to the optical fiber base material is reduced to be no more than a predetermined value.
4. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 3, wherein
the elongation is started, after a difference between the elongation axis and an end of one of the optical fiber base material and the dummy rod attached to the optical fiber base material

is reduced to be 10 mm or less, when the judgment whether the difference between the elongation axis and one of the optical fiber base material and the dummy rod attached to the optical fiber base material is no more than the predetermined value is made.

5. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 3, wherein
the optical fiber base material is hung in such a manner that the distorted portion is positioned lower and the elongation axis is substantially parallel to a plumb direction.

6. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 3 further comprising
examining whether the optical fiber base material is to be hung in the heating furnace without being in contact with the heating furnace, before the optical fiber base material is hung.

7. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to ~~one of Claims~~ claim 3
~~and 4~~, wherein
the difference is detected by using a noncontact position detecting apparatus.

8. (Original) The elongating method according to Claim 7, wherein
the noncontact position detecting apparatus is one of a laser measuring device and an image processing apparatus.

9. (New) The elongating method according to claim 4, wherein
the difference is detected by using noncontact position detecting apparatus.